

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

Of course it will. Its only value comes from inhibiting the ability of citizens to use technology. This becomes insidious because it is never possible to anticipate and have a systems that reacts flexibly and intelligently to situations that the designers simply do not expect. But all the good intentions in the world do not rectify the situation.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices? This is the most troubling area. Because it would be so hard (impossible?) to differentiate between local and global networks the default behavior would almost have to be to prohibit local network activity which would almost certainly be a case of fair use made impossible.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

As if equipment does not already become outdated fast enough already, this would cause all previously made equipment to become instantly obsolescent.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

As Yogi Berra has wisely observed, "It is hard to predict, especially the future." By inserting legislation and legal impediments it is probably possible to derail future products and services that would no longer have an unbiased chance to arise. For instance, Hollywood probably would have made the entire home video phenomenon illegal if they had moved quickly enough. Of course in retrospect we can see how much this market has enriched those who attempted to squelch it.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

First, it will almost certainly reduce the value of all previously manufactured and sold DTV devices to nothing thus alienating all the early adopters. Since such people, who are willing to spend much more than the broad market and provide their own significant support, are crucial to the development of new markets this could entirely scuttle the attempt to move to digital TV technology for the current time.

Other Comments:

If a program provider wants to protect content from the possible infringing activities of others they are not in any way required to make it available to channels that will not provide "perfect" protection. Just take your content and go home. We will do fine without it. Personally I don't care to sacrifice my Constitutional rights for a load of meretricious tripe.